Poetry

Arizona State Hospital

POETRY
COLLECTION
VOLUME 5
2025

VOLUME 5 2025

ARIZONA STATE HOSPITAL
POETRY COLLECTION

POETRY BY

INDIVIDUALS LIVING ON THE ARIZONA STATE HOSPITAL CIVIL CAMPUS

compiled by rehab staff

INTRODUCTION

This anthology showcases the creative works produced by participants of several creative writing rehabilitation groups on the Arizona State Hospital Civil Campus in 2025.

Each month, staff members have carefully selected pieces through a voting process to award first, second, and third place.

Additionally, honorable mentions for each month have been included, celebrating the diverse talents of all contributors.

POEMS

JANUARY

A MONTH OF REST FOR A WEARY HEART,
IS JANUARY, THE NEW YEAR'S START.
THE CLOUDS DROP A BLANKET OF FRESH WHITE SNOW.
THE FARMERS WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THEIR CROPS TO GROW.
BUT STILL THEIR WORK MUST NOT DELAY,
FOR WITHOUT WORK THERE IS NO PLAY.

1ST PLACE

JANUARY

IN A DARKENED SKY, THROUGH AN EBONY GLANCE,
THE COLOR BEHIND THE DARK IS
ILLUMINATED BY COLORS OF BRASS,
IN AN EVENING DISTANCE.

WITH ROCKS AND MOUNTAINS, THERE'S
GREEN GROWTH ON THE HILLS—
EMERALD STAIN OVER A CAVE.

THERE WOULD BE BATS.
AND THERE WAS BATS.
A COUPLE FLIES THROUGH THE
NIGHT SKY.

2ND PLACE

JANUARY

CHOOSE TO LIVE

TODAY IS NOT THE END

TODAY IS THE PRESENT

DON'T LET GO

DON'T GIVE IN

ASK FOR HELP

TURN TO GOD

BE HONEST

BE POSITIVE

LIVE IN TODAY

HELP A FRIEND

SHARE A SMILE

BE THANKFUL

AND MOST OF ALL CHOOSE TO LIVE

3RD PLACE

JANUARY

IT'S NOT THE END BUT A FRESH NEW START.
IT'S THE BEGINNING
OF THINGS TO COME.
NEW FRESH THINGS,
THE EXCITEMENT OF THE NEW!

YOUR EARS DON'T ALWAYS LISTEN,
BUT YOUR THOUGHTS GLISTEN.
I AM NOT ALONE.
I NEED A CELLPHONE.

I WAS WAITING IN LINE AT THE BANK.
THE ROVER, HANK,
WASN'T THERE.
I SHOT MY HANDS IN THE AIR.

JANUARY

THE END OF A LEAF'S LIFE,
SLOWLY FALLING DOWN FROM ITS HOME.
SOON THE LEAF WILL DRY UP
AND DIE.
AND THE WIND WILL BLOW IT AWAY.

A SLOWING RHYTHM, A GENTLY FLOW.
PATIENTLY WAITING, LOVE FEELS SLOW.
BUT I'LL PERSEVERE TO THE END,
LOVING YOU MY BEST FRIEND.
AND I WON'T LET GO.

SOMETHING SO GREAT THAT WE SEEK FOR US.
SOMETHING GOOD FOR LOVE.
SOMETHING MORE THAN US.
SOMETHING GOING GOOD.
SOMETHING THAT WE CAN FIND IN US.

FEBRUARY

ONE RED ROSE FOR MY VALENTINE,
I KEEP HER DEAR FOR SHE IS MINE.
A PISCES WINTER IS FINE FOR ME,
AQUARIUS' SHOPPING SPREE.
KEEP THINGS SIMPLE, THAT'S HOW I'LL BE.
MOM'S ONLY WISH FOR HER DEAR SON,
IS THAT HE HATH LOVE FOR EVERYONE.
ESPECIALLY ON VALENTINE'S DAY,
"I LOVE YOU" IS THE THING TO SAY.

1ST PLACE

FEBRUARY

OVERCOMING

LIFE IS NOT ABOUT GIVING UP.
WE ALL FALL DOWN:
AND FALL DOWN.
BUT WE MUST PICK OURSELVES UP NO MATTER WHAT WE ARE STRUGGLING WITH.
YOU SHAKE YOURSELF OFF AND STAND UP.
SOMETIMES LIFE CAN BE UNBEARABLE.
SOMETIMES WE ARE TOO SAD.
BUT WE MUST FIND SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR.
JUST SO WE CAN SAY,
"YES, WE CAN OVERCOME!"

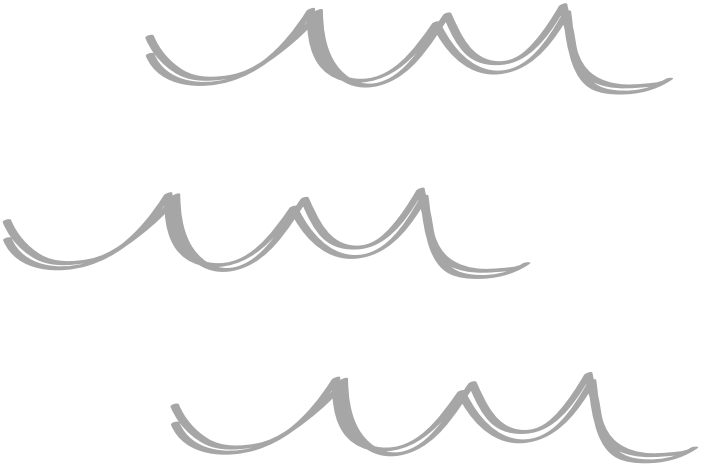
2ND PLACE

FEBRUARY

THINGS I NOTICED

THE FOOTSTEPS IN THE SAND.
WAVES POUNDING THE BEACH.
I OPENED A CAN,
IT WAS WITHIN REACH.
IT'S ALL GOOD!

3RD PLACE



FEBRUARY

HOPE AND NEW BEGINNINGS

IT'S A NEW DAY, A FRESH NEW START.
I SEE THE CLOUDS, FLOATING.
I HEAR THE RAIN IT'S POURING.
I SMELL THE CLEAN FRESH AIR.
IT'S A GREAT DAY.

IF I WERE THE GROUNDHOG...

I'D SHADE MY EYES FROM THE SUN.
PREPARE FOR SOME FUN.
I'M READY TO RUN,
UNDERGROUND, I'M DONE!

BURROW OR BUSINESS AIN'T SUCH KID STUFF.
CATCH A GROUNDHOG AND RAISE IT WELL.
FLY UP AND SEND A MESSAGE TO THEM
AND LEND A HELPING HAND.
THE GROUNDHOG POSES NOSE TO AIR,
AND LEAVES THE QUESTION RESTING THERE.

FEBRUARY

I SEE BEAUTY IN THE RAINDROPS.
I HEAR MUSIC IN THE RAINDROPS.
I FEEL CALM AND ALRIGHT.
I SMELL FLOWERS.

ONE GENTLE RAINDROP FELL ON MY NOSE,
AS THE RAINBOW APPEARED, THE RAIN GOES.
MY SOCKS AND RAINBOOTS HIDE MY TOES.
JOY AND LAUGHTER BEGINS AS THE COOL BREEZE BLOWS.

ONE DROP OF EARTH'S MILK
WENT DOWN MY THROAT, SMOOTH AS SILK.
I ROWED MY BOAT THROUGH THE MOAT OF MILK.
ON THE OTHER SIDE, I CRIED 'COURSE THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE.
I NEVER SPILLED A DROP BUT CRIED LIKE A BABE.
THEN SHAPED MY BEARD LIKE HONEST ABE.

MARCH

WHEN I FORGET OR REFUSE TO GO
ON MY HIKE UP THE MOUNTAINS,
LEAVES A BLEMISHED SOUL.
SENSE OF THE HEART,
BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND.
WE ALL JUST HIKE UP THE MOUNTAIN
TO FIND THE VALUED GRAPE VINE.

1ST PLACE

MARCH

HIT ME BABY ONE MORE TIME.
THE LIGHTNING STRIKES THE FIELD.
A BIRD MAY FLY.
IT DUCKS UNDER A FAT COW THAT
FARMERS MILK.
FLY'S FREELY,
TO THE SKY, TOWARD THE LIGHT.
IT TRIES TO FIND A BRANCH TO REST.

2ND PLACE

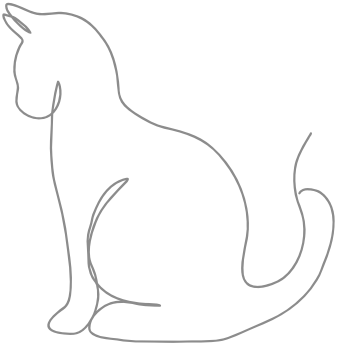
MARCH

AND I SHALL HAVE SOME PEACE
THERE...
SHUSH AND LISTEN TO THE QUIET
SOUNDS.
WHAT DO YOU HEAR?
SOME CALM WATER GOING SLOWLY.
YOU ARE ALL ALONE.
YOU ARE NOW AT PEACE.

3RD PLACE

MARCH

THERE ONCE WAS A CAT NAMED FAT.
WHO THOUGHT THAT
HE WAS COOL.
THEN HE PLAYED A FOOL.
WHEN HE FELL INTO A POOL.



I WILL ARISE AND GO NOW FOR ALWAYS.
NIGHT AND DAY.
I WILL SHOWER.
I WILL RELAX.
I WILL WRITE A POEM.

IT GETS COLD.
LEAVES FALL OFF THE TREE.
THE TEMPERATURE FALLS AND IT BECOMES COLD.
IT COULD RAIN ALL DAY.

MARCH

THERE ONCE WAS A WIZARD NAMED KEVIN.
WHO THOUGHT HE WAS THE BEST WIZARD IN THE WORLD.
HE PUT SPELLS ON PEOPLE HE DIDN'T LIKE.
HE DRANK A POTION AND TURNED MEAN.
UNTIL THE POTION WORE OFF OF HIM.

IT'S THE MATING SEASON.
BUILD A NEST.
IT'S A GOOD REASON.
EAT THE PESTS.
SING OUR SONG.

THE TREES ARE GREEN AGAIN.
THE BIRDS ARE CHIRPING,
MADE IT SEEM MORE WARM OUTSIDE.
THE HARSH WINDS-
MADE IT FEEL REALLY BREEZY OUTSIDE.

APRIL

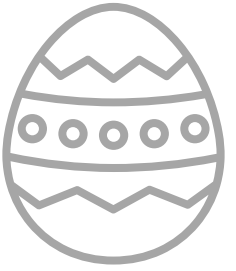
THE LIGHT SEEPS THROUGH THE TREES.
A BLANKET AND A GOOD BOOK TO READ.
THE BROOK FLOWS.
FRESH CLEAN AIR.
TIME TO FEED.

1ST PLACE

APRIL

IF I WERE AN EASTER EGG,
I WOULD BE HAPPY BECAUSE
I WOULD HAVE PRETTY COLORS AND
BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS ON ME.
PEOPLE WOULD PICK ME UP AND HOLD
ME.
PEOPLE WOULD HIDE ME AND FIND ME.
PEOPLE WOULD SMILE AT ME AND
ADORE ME.
PEOPLE WOULD BOIL ME TO EAT ME;
THEY ARE FULL OF PROTEIN IN THEM.
AND ON EASTER SUNDAY, THERE'S ME.
THE ONE EASTER EGG WOULD BE
FOUND, SAD,
BECAUSE SOON I'D BE CRACKED.
THAT'S THE END OF ME.

2ND PLACE

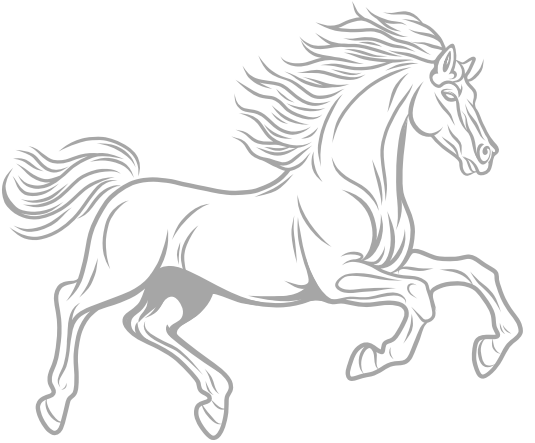


APRIL

THE LIGHT ON THE TRAIL

THE LIGHT ON THE TRAIL MAKES THE
WALK AND RIDE EASY.
NEVER WANTED TO TASTE DIRT-
SO RIDE IN THE LIGHT
AND YOU'LL BE WHERE YOU WON'T
HURT.

3RD PLACE



APRIL

OF GRIEF:
IT'S LIKE I GOT THIS FEELING IN MY BONES,
CAN BREATHE AGAIN.
I FEEL LIKE I AM BORN AGAIN.

LOVE WHAT IT LOVES!
COMBING MY HAIR.
PUTTING MY HAND NEAR THOSE CHERRIES.
I DON'T WANT TO BE LAME.
MAKING MY NOTE TO BURY ALL MY BERRIES.

I SEE A DUST DEVIL.
I HEAR THE WIND BLOWING.
I TASTE FLOWERS ON THE WIND.
I FEEL THE SPRING CLIMATE.

SNOW
CROSSING THE STREAM WAS HARD.
THE ICE MADE IT SLICK TO WALK ON.
SLIPPING INTO THE WATER.
WET.

APRIL

ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO WAS MAKE YOU HAPPY

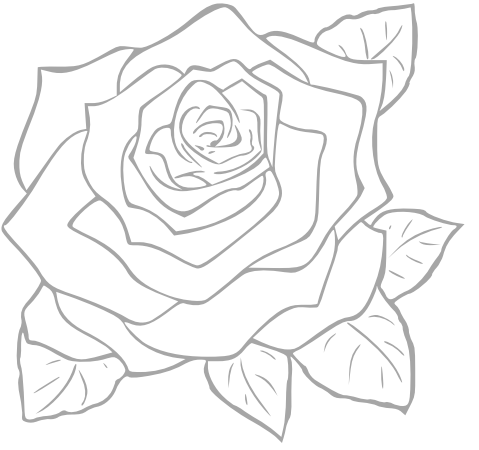
ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO WAS MAKE YOU HAPPY.
I BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EUROPE TO FEED YOU,
TO CLOTHE YOU AND TO MAKE YOU RICH AND WEALTHY
AND GIVE YOU THE BEST FOOD EVER.
SO YOU DON'T STARVE TO DEATH-HUNGRY-
SO HERE IS MY SONG FOR YOU:
ALL I EVER WANTED TO DO IS MAKE YOU HAPPY.
I PRAY TO GOD IN HEAVEN THAT YOU ARE HAPPY.
REMEMBER THE MONEY I GAVE YOU,
ALL IN YOUR WORLD'S SAVINGS CHASE BANK.
GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

I AWAKEN LIKE I'M FALLING.
WHEN I'M GONE,
I'LL BE BROKEN.
MY HEARTS STOLEN.
WINE FOR MY MAIDEN.
SIGNED THE DUE
TO LIFESAVING.

MAY

BALANCE IS FOUND IN LOVE AND PEACE.
ALSO IN SPIRIT AND MIND.
IS FOUND IN THE FIVE SENSES.
I SEE FUN AND BEAUTY.
I TASTE A WILTING ROSE.
I SMELL SWEETNESS.
I TOUCH THE THORNS OF THE ROSE.
I HEAR THE ROSE PETALS DROPPING IN THE RIVER,
ON THE SIDE OF THE BANK,
WITH LUSCIOUS, GREEN, LEAFY TREES.

1ST PLACE

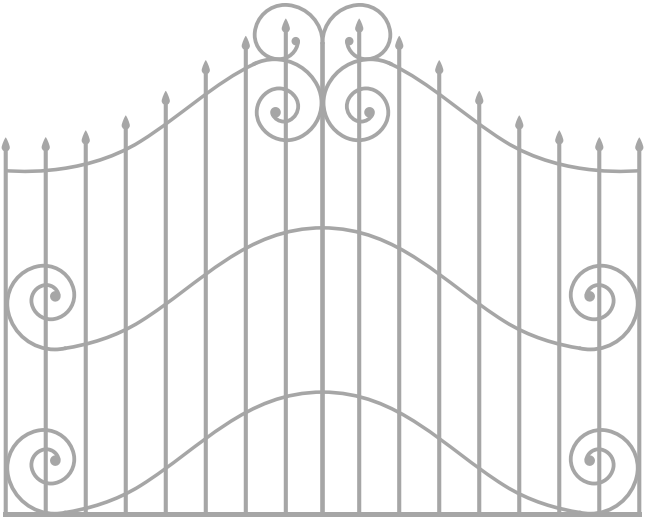


MAY

PEARLY GATES

IT'S BETTER TO BE LATE AT THE GOLDEN GATE THAN TO ARRIVE IN HELL ON TIME.

2ND PLACE



MAY

CHASM

I BELIEVE IN ABYSS, IT'LL TAKE ME AWAY.
I BELIEVE I'LL BE KNOCKED OFF MY FEET FOREVER.
ANY WOUND, CRACK, FISSURE CAN BE HEALED.
TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS.
THE CHASM IS FAR TOO WIDE,
I MAY NEVER RETURN.
I WILL BE LOST FOREVER IN THE STARS.
I GLANCE AND SEE YOUR FACE,
BECKONING ME BACK.

3RD PLACE

MAY

ONDI DEEP FROM THE SURFACE.
COULD MY HEART DROWN INSIDE OF
OUR CHASMIC CIRCLE?
IT'S NEVER TO COME OUTSIDE AGAIN,
EVER.

PUPIL TO PUPIL.
IRIS TO IRIS.
EYE TO EYE.
WE DON'T FIGHT OR SPY.
FROM THE BLUE TO THE GREEN.
THINGS WERE LOOKING LEAN AND MEAN.
LOOKING INTO DADDY'S EYES
WE JUMP AND EMBRACE AND CRY,
"NOW IS NOT THE DAY FOR GOODBYE!"

LET ME BATHE IN THE BLUE OCEAN,
BEFORE YOUR EYES, ARDENTLY CARESSING MY
HAIR,
AS I GLANCE OVER MY SHOULDER IN THE
MOONLIGHT.
LOSE ME FOREVER, SHALL YOU STEP TO THE
RIGHT OR THE LEFT

MAY

HOW IS IT THE SPACE BETWEEN US CONTAINS
A CHASM SO DEEP?
THE FEELINGS ARE DEEP OF SADNESS AND
SORROW.
I CAN'T GET OVER THE FEELINGS.
WISDOM COMES FROM UNDERNEATH THE
SOUL, MIND AND SPIRIT.

HOW DEEP IS YOUR LOVE?
YOUR LOVE IS DEEP, DEEPER THAN
THE DEEPEST SEA, IT WERE AS IF IT
CONTAINS A CHASM SO DEEP
IT COULD CONTAIN ALL SEVEN SEAS.

MAY

CLOUD FOREST

THE CLOUDS LOOK WHITE.
I SEE THE CLOUD'S LIGHT.
I HEAR THE CLOUDS IN THE WIND.
I GUESS I MIGHT HAVE SINNED.
I WILL GET THROUGH THE PLIGHT.

FOREST PATH

I SEE WILDLIFE.
I SEE A PATH IN THE WOODS.
I HEAR THE WIND.

SWIMMER

I SWAM WITH THE DOLPHINS.
I WAS THERE FOR A COMPETITION.
I SWAM LAST JANUARY.
I SWAM IN THE JORDAN RIVER.
I SWAM BECAUSE I WANTED TO
GET AS COLD AS AN ICE CUBE.

JUNE

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT...

COULD YOU IMAGINE BEING POOR?
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU WERE
LIVING ON THE STREETS?
HOW WOULD YOU FEEL?
YOU THING YOU GOT IT ALL TOGETHER
YOU SHOULD STOP AND THINK
WHAT ARE YOU GRATEFUL FOR?
WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO
GOOD PEOPLE?
JUST REMEMBER TO COUNT YOUR
BLESSINGS AND REMEMBER THAT IF
YOU JUST TRY YOU WILL BE OK
HOLD ON AND NEVER LET GO
YOU JUST HAVE TO TAKE THE NEXT
STEP

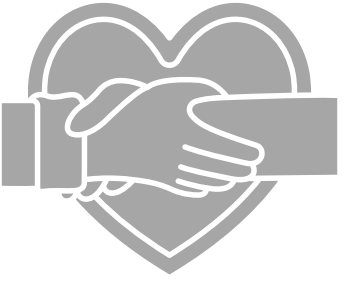
1ST PLACE

JUNE

I SACRIFICE

IN ALL MY DAYS
I KNEW YOU NEEDED HELP
I HEARD SCREAMING-YONDER-
I SACRIFICE-FOR YOU
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES
I'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES
TO MAKE YOU HAPPY
INTO MY ARMS
I'D LAY DOWN MY LIFE
AND EVERYTHING IN IT-IT'S
MY SACRIFICE FOR YOU
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
SO I SACRIFICE-I SACRIFICE FOR YOU

2ND PLACE



JUNE

SEE THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN
IN THE BEAUTY OF NATURE.
I FEEL INVIGORATED BY THE TREES AND WATER.
I HEAR THE BIRDS.
I SMELL THE OXYGEN OF FRESH TREES.

3RD PLACE

JUNE

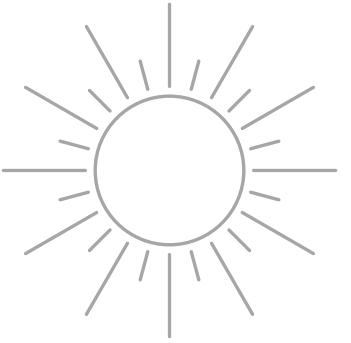
SILLY SUPERPOWER
WHEN I THINK,
MY ARMS MOVE LIKE JELLY.

SILLY SUPERPOWER
THE WAY TO TRAVEL IN TIME, PAST OR FUTURE,
BY ACTING AND/OR BEHAVING SILLY BY
LAUGHING OUT LOUD LIKE AN ANNOYING
GOAT.

LYING IN THE TALL GRASS
I LIE IN THE TALL GREEN, GRASSY FIELD.
WHERE MUST I GO FROM HERE?
WHEN WILL I RETURN TO MY MAKER?
WHO WILL EVER FIND ME?

JUNE

ALIVE-TO BE EATEN, LIKE MUNCHIES AND IT'S SO TRUE.
NIGHT AND DAY-SCARY NOISES.
RAIN AND DRY-HEAT AND HEADACHE CUZ IT'S GANGSTA



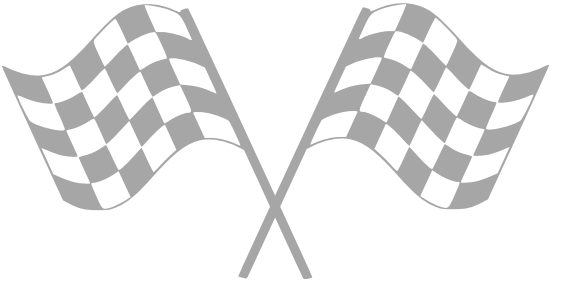
WHEN I SEE THE SUN,
I KNOW MY DAY IS GOING TO BE GOOD.
GOD WOKE ME UP THIS MORNING.
IT BRIGHTENS UP MY SPIRIT.

LIFE IS GIVING
TO BE ABLE TO HEAL YOURSELF
THE GIFT OF SUNLIGHT TO SEE
NATURE RULES
PEACE OF LIFE
THE SPIRIT OF MAN

JUNE

PASSION

DON'T EVER GIVE UP.
HAVE PASSION IN LIFE.
THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING OUT THERE FOR US.
STRIVE TO BE THE BEST.
WHEN YOU FALL DOWN,
PICK YOURSELF UP.
RUN WITH ALL YOUR HEART.
LIFE IS ABOUT RUNNING THAT RACE.
SO KEEP ON GOING.
THERE'S ALWAYS AN END TO THE RACE.



JULY

I WENT TO THE RIVER

I WENT TO THE RIVER AND I COULDN'T
GET ACROSS.
I PAID $5 FOR AN OLD GRAY HOSS.
THE HOSS WOULDN'T HOLLER,
TRADE IT FOR $1.
A DOLLAR WOULDN'T PASS
SO I THREW IT IN THE GRASS.
THE GRASS WOULDN'T GROW,
TRADE IT FOR A PIG.
THE PIG WOULDN'T SQUEAL.
I TRADE IT FOR A WHEEL,
WITHOUT A GOOD DEAL.
THE DEAL WOULDN'T PASS,
SO I THREW IT IN THE GRASS.
THE GRASS WOULDN'T PASS
SO I GAVE IT A HOLLER.
TRADE HER FOR A DOLLAR.
I TRADE IT FOR A BOOT,
THE BOOT WOULDN'T FIT
AND I DECIDED TO PUT IT IN THE RIVER.
AND THAT'S JUST WHAT I DID.

1ST PLACE

JULY

FOREVER GRATEFUL

OH, I AM SO GRATEFUL
WHEN TIMES GET TOUGH
I HAVE ALWAYS MADE IT OUT
DURING THAT TIME I DIDN'T THINK I
WOULD MAKE IT
I WAS MISERABLE
ALL I SAW WAS DARKNESS
AND I WAS IN A DEEP DARK HOLE
I USED MY COPING SKILLS
I ASKED FOR HELP
AND I SLOWLY CLIMBED OUT OF THAT
DARK HOLE
GOD IS GOOD
GOD IS GREAT
AND I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL

2ND PLACE

JULY

LOVE LIKE A RIVER

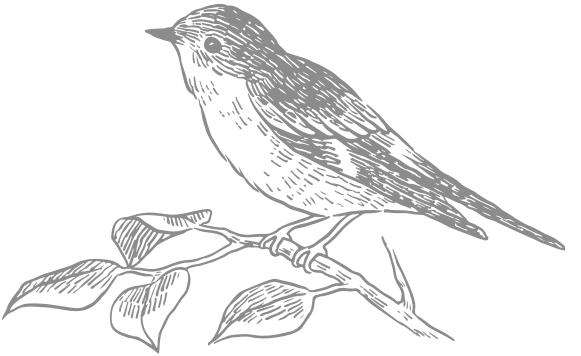
YOUR HEART FLOODS LIKE A RIVER OF PEACE TO ME.
YOUR DECLARATION, LOVE AND GRACE.
YOUR LOVE LIKE A RIVER AND
YOU'RE GOING DOWN BENEATH COVERS.
I LOVE YOU LIKE NO OTHER.

3RD PLACE

JULY

IF I WERE A BIRD

I WOULD BE A SPARROW AND SING IN THE TREES.
I WOULD SING ABOUT THE SPRING AND ENJOYING THE SIGHTS.
I'D SING TO THE PEOPLE BELOW, PUT OUT MY SEED THEN GO.
TASTE THE SUNFLOWER AND MILLET. I'D FLY TREE TO THE WATER,
TO COME BACK TO MY NEST BECAUSE OF LOVE.



ORIOLE

SPREAD WINGS.
FLY AWAY, SEE YOU AGAIN SOME OTHER DAY.
IN THIS BIRD BATH I WILL PLAY.
ORIOLE ORANGE AND YELLOW,
WASHING HIMSELF, QUITE A FELLOW.
TAKING FLIGHT.

JULY

FROM STAR IN LOVE AND LOVE GROWS.
IT FAVES TO BLOOM AND ART EVERYWHERE.
LIKE, PERIOD.
RESPECT, APPRECIATE WITH NO DOUBT.
JUST EAT MORE BREW.
LOVE THE RHYME.

WHAT I'D SAY TO A STAR
YOU ARE A DIAMOND.
STAR IN THE SKY,
WRITE ME DOWN.

JULY

BUT THE RIVER HAS WAYS
OF SOUND AND LIGHT AND RIPPLE.
THE TALK AND SOUND THE WAY.
ALWAYS REMEMBER WHAT LIFE BRINGS.
LIFE, WOULD YOU SIT UNDER GOD'S GLORY?
PEACE LIKE A RIVER, EXPLAINED ME.

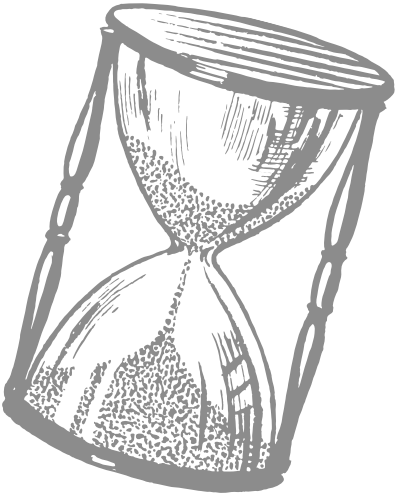
THE RIVER SAID TO ME,
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SCARY TO GET IN.
JUST AS LONG AS YOU'RE IN A BODYSUIT
AND NOT FALLING INTO THE DRINK.

AUGUST

PATIENCE

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE.
THE MIND CONTROLS.
INSIDE CAN BREW,
IF YOU DON'T EXPRESS WHAT IS YOU.
FINDING SPACE BETWEEN YOUR DREAMS.
DON'T DWELL ON THINGS OUTSIDE
OF YOUR CONTROL.
HAVE PATIENCE FOR YOUR DREAMS FOR
ONE DAY THEY MAY COME TRUE.

1ST PLACE



AUGUST

AT A TIME WHERE I SIT STILL,
CONTEMPLATING MY EXISTENCE AND MY SORROWS
A CAT WALKS BESIDE ME AND SPEAKS TO ME
THEN WALKS AWAY FROM ME IN BOREDOM FOR LACK OF RESPONSE.
AS IT STARTS AWAY, IT SAYS TO ME,
“I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE FOOD...”

2ND PLACE

AUGUST

IT'S OK TO HAVE A BAD DAY

TODAY WAS TOUGH

AT TIMES I WAS CRYING

AT TIMES I WAS IN A HOLE

I REACHED OUT FOR HELP

I USED MY COPING SKILLS

I WANTED TO GIVE UP

BUT I THOUGHT OF MY PROGRESS HERE

AND I DIDN'T WANT TO START OVER

AND I HAD HOPE IN MYSELF

AND I COULDN'T GIVE UP

AND I COULDN'T GIVE IN

I HAD TO KEEP ON GOING

NO MATTER WHAT, I KNEW I COULD MAKE IT

I MADE IT BEFORE

AND WHEN I DID STRUGGLE THEN

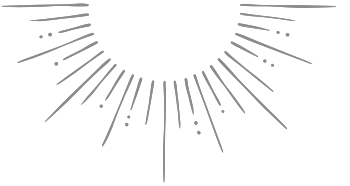
GOD HAD MY BACK

I CAN DO ALL THINGS

3RD PLACE

AUGUST

IT'S A BRIGHT BEACH DAY TODAY.
I LOVE LOOKING AT THE WAVES AND
SWIMMING IN THEM.
THE SUN IS WARM AND PRETTY, BRIGHT
AND FUN.

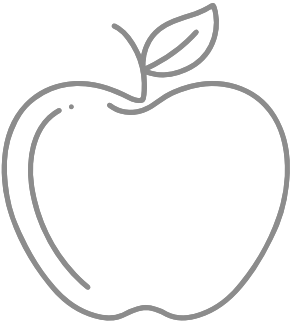


NATURE COMMITS ITS COURSE.
THAT WHICH IT'S FREE UPON,
AND GRASS IS STRONG.
GETTING THROUGH IS THE EVERYTHING-
WHY THAT THEY GROW.
LEAVES, LEAVES FALLING
AND THE DEER IS NOT SAFE
IN WITHIN THE MORE AGREEABLE SPACE.

A PAUSED MORNING
I SEE CARNIVAL SMOKE AND CROW BIRDS
CHIRPING.
I SEE CARS AND TRUCKS MOVING DOWN
THE ROAD SLOPES.
JUST DOING NOTHING, PLAYING
BASKETBALL.

AUGUST

A PAUSED MORNING
I AM ALONE, STANDING BY THE TREE.
JUST WONDERING IF I COULD BOB FOR THE APPLES.
THE WIND IS FLOWING TO THE RIGHT,
AND BRINGING THE SMELL OF FRESH BREEZE.



THE SUN.
IT'S THERE WHEN YOU SEE IT.
IT'S THERE WHEN YOU NEED IT.
IT'S THERE EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T.
IT'S NEVER GOING AWAY AND NEITHER ARE YOU!

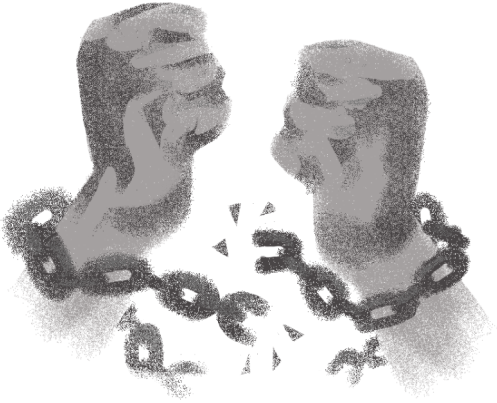
BLADE OF GRASS
HERE COMES THE DEER.
WILL THEY EAT ME,
OR LET ME GROW?
LET ME BLOW IN THE WIND.

SEPTEMBER

CAPTURES

WE SEE HIDDEN CHAINS.
THEY JUST SIT THERE LOOKING SCARY.
LOOKING LIKE AT ANY MINUTE WE COULD BE CAPTURED.
HELP US BEFORE THE STRANGER GETS HERE.
REMOVE THE HIDDEN CHAINS.

1ST PLACE

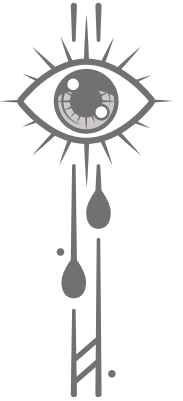


SEPTEMBER

TEARS

BABY I GOT TEARS RUNNING DOWN MY FACE, AS I AM STRUGGLING TO STAY AWAKE.
BABY GOT ME THINKING ABOUT THINGS WE USED TO DO.
BUT BABY GOT ME THINKING ABOUT YOU-YOU-YOU.
AND YET AS I AM TRYING TO SAVE MYSELF FROM THE MEMORIES OF YOU.
SO WHAT ARE WE GON DO-DO-DO.
I WAKE UP NEXT TO YOU-YOU-YOU.
I START LOOKING AT THIS FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW-VIEW-VIEW.

2ND PLACE

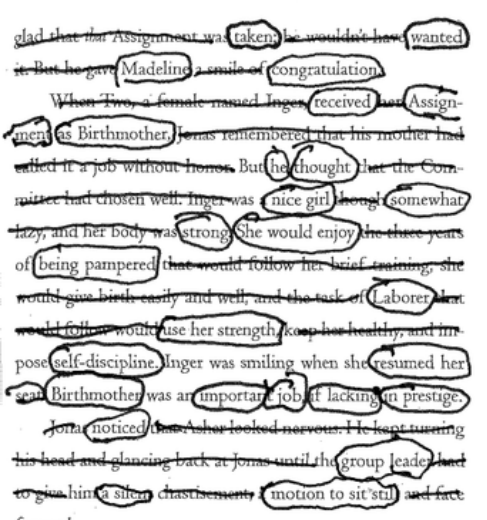


SEPTEMBER

SHE IS BEAUTIFUL,
LIKE THE SUNSET AFTER A SUNNY DAY,
LIKE THE CREATION OF GOD.
SHE HAS A BEAUTIFUL HEART
AND SHE IS SWEET LIKE SUGAR.
SHE WILL NEVER BE ALONE AGAIN.
SHE WILL NEVER BE HURT AGAIN
BECAUSE SHE IS LOVED
WHOLEHEARTEDLY
BY ME.

3RD PLACE

SEPTEMBER



THE GIVER | 67

glad that that Assignment was taken, he wouldn't have wanted it. But he gave Madeline a smile of congratulation.

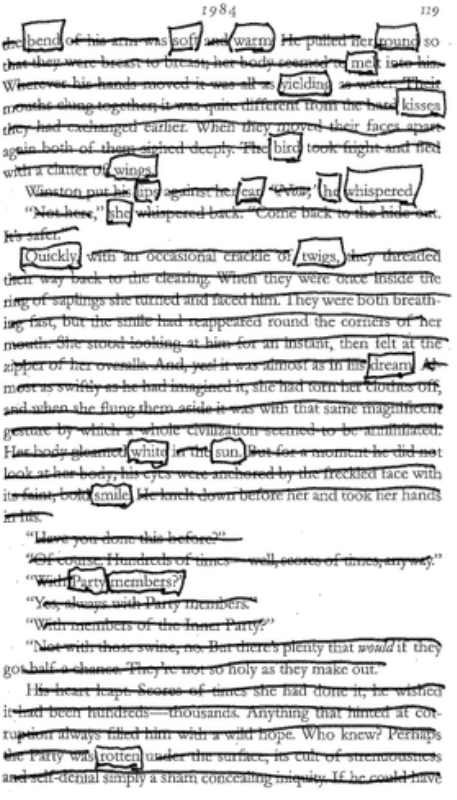
When Two, a female named Inger received her Assignment as Birthmother. Jonas remembered that his mother had called it a job without honor. But he thought that the Committee had chosen well. Inger was a nice girl, though somewhat lazy, and her body was strong. She would enjoy the three years of being pampered that would follow her brief training; she would give birth easily and well, and the task of Laborer that would follow would use her strength, keep her healthy, and impose self-discipline. Inger was smiling when she resumed her seat. Birthmother was an important job if lacking in prestige.

Jonas noticed that Asher looked nervous. He kept turning his head and glancing back at Jonas until the group leader had to give him a silent chastisement, a motion to sit still and face forward.

THE GIVER BLACKOUT POETRY - CELEBRATING BANNED BOOKS MONTH

TAKEN; WANTED.
MADELINE, CONGRATULATION.
RECEIVED ASSIGNMENT AS BIRTHMOTHER.
HE THOUGHT,
"NICE GIRL, SOMEWHAT STRONG,
SHE WOULD ENJOY BEING PAMPERED."
LABORER, USE HER STRENGTH,
SELF-DISCIPLINE RESUMED HER SEAT.
BIRTHMOTHER,
IMPORTANT JOB, IF LACKING IN PRESTIGE.
NOTICED GROUP LEADER,
A SILENT MOTION TO STILL.

SEPTEMBER



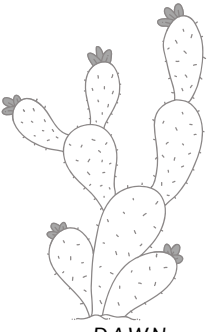
1984 BLACKOUT POETRY - CELEBRATING BANNED BOOKS MONTH

BEND SOFT, WARM, ROUND.
MELT, YIELDING KISSES, BIRD WINGS.
LIPS, EAR.
HE WHISPERED.
SHE QUICKLY TWIGS.
DREAM WHITE SUN.
PARTY MEMBERS?
ROTTEN.

SEPTEMBER

GENTLE PLACE
A GENTLE PLACE WOULD BE A
HAMMOCK,
SWINGING BETWEEN TWO TREES, VERY
SLOWLY.
DRIVING AROUND IN AN OLD SCHOOL
TRUCK.
WAVES CRASHING, THE TIDE RECEDING,
ON THE BEACH OR IN THE CITY.
AT A RESTAURANT WITH YOUR FAMILY.
ALWAYS KNOW THAT BEING LOVING
BRINGS THE GENTLENESS.

SUNNY WEST-BORDER BEHIND
BARBED WIRE FENCE,
PRICKLY PEAR,
MOUNTAINS WITH PLANTS,
DUSTY PATH.



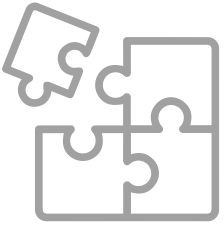
DAWN
SUNSHINE ALWAYS APPEARS AT DAWN.
IT IS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW DAY.
YOU CAN CELEBRATE BY WAKING UP TO A
GOOD START.

OCTOBER

MY LIFE IS A PUZZLE

ONE PIECE IS STRAIGHT
IT GOES IN EASY
IT SHOWS THAT MY LIFE
IS NOT THAT HARD
SOME PIECES ARE SLANTED
THEY GO IN CROOKED
IT SHOWS THAT MY LIFE
IS KINDA OF HARD
SOME PIECES ARE BROKEN
THEY DON'T FIT IN THE PUZZLE
IT SHOWS THAT MY LIFE
IS VERY BROKEN
IN MY LIFE
I HAVE SHOWN THAT THE PUZZLE
CAN BE COMPLETED
CAN BE FINISHED

1ST PLACE



OCTOBER

CALM

ROSES ARE RED,
VIOLETS ARE TOO.
I AM STILL IN LOVE,
BUT NOT WITH YOU.
YOU BROKE MY HEART,
AND MADE ME CRY.
I AM LEAVING NOW,
GOODBYE.

2ND PLACE

OCTOBER

HALLOWEEN NIGHT

LETS HOPE FOR NO RAIN OR
LIGHTNING.
CANDIES.
FROM MILK CHOCOLATE TURTLE
CANDIES,
TO DELIGHTFUL TREATS IN A BAG.
DON'T BE SLEEPY,
OR YOU'LL MISS THE NIGHT!
THE KEY OF THE NIGHT
IS TO HAVE FUN AND EAT THE TREAT.
SO BE FAST ON YOUR FEET.

3RD PLACE

OCTOBER

THE ROSE

MY ROSE, MY DARLING, TIRED SPIRIT.
I SMELL ROSES, THEY MAKE ME CALM.
THE COLORS CHANGE, THE COLORS STAY THE SAME.
THE CHILD WOKE UP ON A DOLLOP OF RAIN.
IT SMELLED LIKE ROSES AND SHE WAS HAPPY.

THE TURTLE

THERE ONCE WAS A TURTLE WHO LIVED IN A CASTLE. HE GOT A KEY TO A LETTER TELLING HIM THAT THERE WAS SOMEONE SLEEPING NEXT DOOR IN THEIR CASTLE. SO THE TURTLE LEFT HIS CASTLE, OH SO SLOWLY, AND WAS OUTSIDE WHEN HE GOT STRUCK BY LIGHTNING. WHEN HE GOT STRUCK BY LIGHTNING, HE STARTED GOING SO FAST-HE REACHED NEXT DOOR IN 30 SECONDS. THE TURTLE WOKE UP THE NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR JUST IN TIME TO SAVE THE CASTLE FROM BURNING DOWN. THE END.

OCTOBER

LANTERN LIGHT
PUMPKIN SMILING IN GOLDEN GLOW
BECAUSE THE SHADOW TOOTH AND CANDLE
BLEW TOGETHER.
HAPPINESS GROWS STRONGER ON THE
NIGHT
WHERE YOU TRICK-OR-TREAT.
YOU MAY FIND SOMETHING NEAT.
ALL THE KIDS ENJOY IT!

HALLOWEEN AND HEARTS ONCE MORE
SOME THINGS I NEED AT THE
STORES.
IT'S A WAY TO MAKE PEOPLE KNOW
WHAT DAY IT IS-
ALL HALLOWS EVE.
I WONDER HOW MUCH I COULD
MAKE
BOBBING FOR APPLES.
MY NEIGHBORS DID THAT BEFORE.

OCTOBER

A GENTLE HALLOWEEN NIGHT
ON A DARK FALL NIGHT
WATCHING THE SIGHTS.
THE BIRD'S FLIGHT.
TOO LATE TO FLY A KITE.
ALL THE COLORS BUT WHITE.
'TILL THE PASSING OF THE NIGHT.

FALLING LEAVES
THE LEAVES FALL
LIKE THE TEARS FROM MY EYES
I GO TO CATCH THE LEAVES
BUT THEIR AS SLIPPERY
AS MY WET TEARS THAT ARE NOW DOWN MY CHEEK
THE LEAVES ARE STARTING TO CHANGE
JUST AS MY EYES GET DRY
THE LEAVES ARE TURNING SLOWLY YELLOW
AND MY FROWN HAS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
AND THE LEAVES SLOWLY HIT THE GROUND
I AM NOW SMILING ON THE OUTSIDE

NOVEMBER

CHANGES

AS THE WEATHER GETS COLDER,
WE LOOK FOR OUR JACKETS,
WE LOOK FOR SOME JEANS.
WE NO LONGER LOOK FOR OUR SHORTS
IN THE WASHING MACHINE.
TIME TO GET READY FOR THE TREATS,
FOR THE FEAST TO COME.
WHAT HAPPENED IN NOVEMBER?
WE LOST ALL THE GREEN.
OH FICKLE GOD, WHY'RE YOU SO MEAN?
AT LEAST WE'LL CELEBRATE
WITH TURKEY AND STRING BEAN.

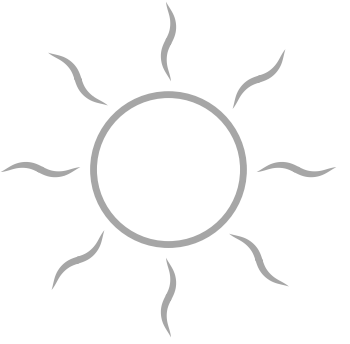
1ST PLACE

NOVEMBER

SUN

THE SUN, MY SON.
BRIGHTLY SHINING ALMOST EVERYDAY.
LIKE ME, AVOID THE CLOUDS, AVOID THE HATERS.
ALL THEM HATER CAN KISS MY BUTT.
BURN THE HATERS WITH THE BEAMS OF LIGHT.
BREAK THROUGH THE CLOUDS WITH ALL YOUR GLORIOUS MIGHT.
GOOD FOR BEAMING LIGHT.
INTO THE CROSSROADS WE GO TO FIGHT.

2ND PLACE



NOVEMBER

CELEBRATE NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

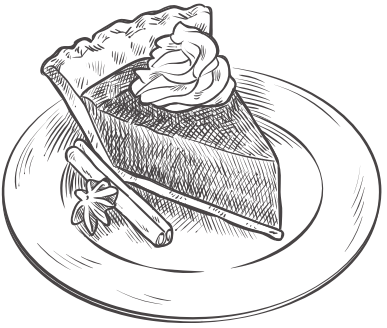
WITH BEAUTY BEFORE ME, I WALK.
BEAUTY IS IN EVERYTHING, IT'S ALL AROUND US.
BEAUTY IS IN THE AIR.
ON THE TREES,
IN THE MOUNTAINS.
WHEREVER I MAY WANDER,
BEAUTY WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.
BEAUTY IS A BLESSING.

3RD PLACE

NOVEMBER

I AM...
I AM SUNSHINE ON A SUNNY DAY.
I AM A BRAVE SEA TURTLE, STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE.
I AM SMOOTH, LIKE SAND ON THE BEACH.
I AM LIKE A WATERFALL, SOUNDING SOFT AND GENTLE.
I AM A PALM TREE BLOWING IN THE RUSHING WIND.

CELEBRATE VETERAN'S DAY
EAGLE EYES, AMERICAN SKIES.
HOW DO YOU FLY HIGH?
INTO THE SKY, THEY FLY HIGH.
FOR US THEY DEFEND.



FINDING SMALL WARMTHS, A CUP, A SMILE.
PUMPKIN PIE, DESSERT KIND.
IN YOUR TUMMY, OH WHAT A SURPRISE!
YOU COULD JUST REMEMBER.
CELEBRATE NOVEMBER BEGINNING.
IT WAS GREAT!

NOVEMBER

THE LEAVES ARE FALLING.
NO MORE HOT WEATHER.
NO BIRDS TO DO THE CALLING.
STILL GOT A FEATHER.
INSIDE I'M DRAWING.
GETTING READY FOR THE GET TOGETHER.
I'M CALLING.
LIKING THE WEATHER.

IN QUIET HEARTS WHERE SHADOWS FALL
FOR GET TOGETHERS.
OUT GOES THE CALL.
THE FEAST TO COME,
FOR ALL, NOT SOME.
MIGHTY NICE WEATHER,
NO BIRDS OR FEATHERS.
THE FEAST TO COME!
ENJOY AND BE HAPPY,
SO DON'T BE SLOPPY.

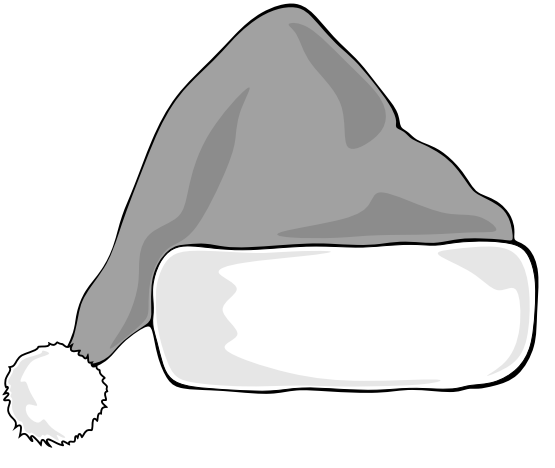
NOVEMBER

COLORS OF FALL: RED
START OF LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.
IT REMINDS ME OF MY CHILDHOOD,
WHEN I USED TO WATCH THE DISNEY
FAIRYTALE ABOUT HER.
IT WAS A REALLY TOUCHING MOMENT IN MY
LIFE.

BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER
WINDS START BLOWING.
GARDENS NO LONGER SOWING.
RIVERS FLOWING.
IF STILL HERE, THE BIRDS CROWING.
PEACE, WARMTH INSIDE FLOWING.

DECEMBER

SANTA EATS LOTS OF CABBAGE.
SANTA'S BREATH STINKS VERY BAD.
BUT WE CAN'T TELL HIM OR HE'LL
GET MAD.
WE SHOULD ALL BUY SOME
TOOTHPASTE AND TOOTHBRUSHES.
GET A HINT!
TAKE A MINT!



1ST PLACE

DECEMBER

LOVE CANNOT BE WRAPPED BECAUSE
IT IS NOT A PRESENT.
IT IS A FEELING.
LOVE IS EVERYTHING THEREFORE
WITHOUT IT THINGS ARE HARDER.
IF I LOVE THEM AND THEY LOVE ME
EVERYTHING IS GREAT.
BUT YOU NEVER KNOW.
I SPOIL MY LOVES WITH AFFECTION
AND GIFTS.
I ONCE GAVE A WEDDING RING,
I WAS NERVOUS, SAD, HAPPY AND
SCARED TO GIVE IT,
AND I ENDED UP GETTING PLAYED IN
THE END.
BUT I LEARNED TO LOVE MYSELF
MORE.
MEN CAN GET SAD AND CRY TOO,
BUT HAPPINESS AND JOY CAME FROM
THAT,
TO BETTER FIND MYSELF.

2ND PLACE

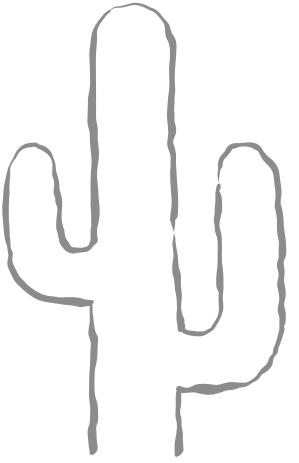
DECEMBER

I WRAP MYSELF IN QUIET
HOURS
AND LET THE SEASON REST
WITH ME.
IT'S A COMFORTING FEELING
THIS SEASON
AND I CHERISH THIS MOMENT.

3RD PLACE

DECEMBER

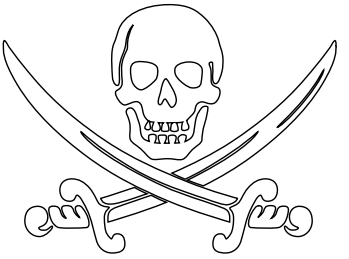
DESERT ADVICE FOR WINTER
IT'S GETTING COLDER, WINTER IS COMING.
STAY HYDRATED.
STAY WARM,
SO YOU DON'T FREEZE TO DEATH.
STAY INDOORS AT WORK.
DON'T GO OUT AS MUCH DURING THE COLD SEASON.
STILL DRESS COMFORTABLE.
BUT BE PREPARED.



NO CACTUS,
NO STEP ON ME.
I AM A LOCUST,
FEEL ME.
FIND A SNAKE HOLE
AND REST.

DECEMBER

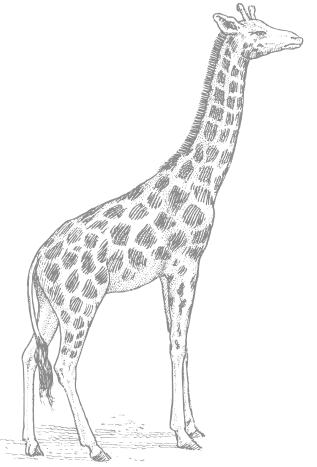
SNOWFLAKES REMIND ME OF A
HOLIDAY.
I CELEBRATE ON HOLIDAYS, ESPECIALLY
CHRISTMAS.
KEEP WARM, HIBERNATE.
BEARS, TIGERS, ELEPHANTS ALL
HIBERNATE.
THEY SLOW THEIR BREATHING:
IN & OUT.
VERY EASY, CONTROLLED.
AT CHRISTMAS TIME YOU SEE FROST ON
GRASS.
IT SOUNDS TERRIBLE.
BECAUSE I LIKE TO BE PUT TOGETHER
WHERE IT'S WARM.



WINTER MOVES I
I WISH TO SEE THE PIRATE IN WINTER.
HIBERNATION IS KEY TO THE PIRATE.
THE PIRATE SWEATS LANDS OF GRASSES IN
WINTER.
IT MEANS ICICLES KNOW HOW TO SWEAT THE
LAND.
THE PIRATE'S HOUSE IS WELCOMING.

DECEMBER

A NIGHTLIGHT IN THE HALLWAY,
WITH SHADOWS DANCING ALONG THE WALL.
WITH SOUNDS OF ELVES
PUTTING PRESENTS BELOW THE TREE.



I'M GOING TO THE MAXIMUM PRISON TO GET A BOOK THAT WILL WELCOME ME TO TAKE IT FROM ITS NOOK. THE BOOK MUST BE HELD FOR THE GIRAFFE THAT READS IT TO TRY AND COPE WITH PAINTING. THE GIRAFFE LIVES IN PRISON BECAUSE HE ACCIDENTLY TRAPPED HIMSELF IN WHILE BUILDING IT.

HELD GENTLY BY THE TURNING YEAR.
WILL THERE BE FEARS TO COME?
WILL THE NEW YEAR BE GOOD OR BAD?
THE YEAR WAS SAD.
A BETTER YEAR NEXT YEAR.

AUTHORS' COMMENTS

The authors were invited to reflect on their writing and what it means to them.

Their words speak to creativity, self-expression, and the joy of being heard, offering a glimpse into how writing can open space for connection, pride, and possibility.

"IT MAKES ME VERY PROUD AND INTUITIVE. WRITING HELPS ME PASS THE DAYS, TO WIN AND BE RECOGNIZED MAKES ME FEEL WONDERFUL. THE PRIZES ARE AWESOME TOO, PIECES OF CANDY!"

"I FEEL VERY SPECIAL BECAUSE I PUT FORTH WITH BIG GOALS. I LIKE TO ACHIEVE THINGS AND PEOPLE VOTING FOR ME AND GETTING IN THE BOOK I SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER PEOPLE. I ENLIGHTEN THEIR DAY AND BRING THEM JOY. I LIKE HAVING FANS THAT WRITE ME FAN MAIL."

"WRITING AND BEING IN THE BOOK MAKES ME HAPPY AND FEELS NICE. I LIKE KNOWING MY NEIGHBORS LIKE MY WORK. I RESPECT ALL THOSE THAT VOTED, THANKS ESPECIALLY FOR LOVING MY WORK."

"I LIVE EVERYDAY THE RIGHT WAY SO I TRY TO WRITE LIKE THAT, IT IS NICE TO BE REWARDED WITH YOUR VOTES. WRITING IS USUALLY A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE, IT IS INSPIRATIONAL TO KNOW I'LL BE IN THE BOOK. I'LL CONTINUE TO WRITE MORE AND MORE."

"I LIKE TO WRITE ABOUT MONKEYS. I LIKE TO EXPLAIN STORIES BECAUSE IT SOUNDS FUNNY WRITING LINES BY HEART."

"WRITING IS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE FOR ME BECAUSE I GET TO WRITE ABOUT THINGS THAT I LOVE IN MY MUSIC AND MY POEMS. I LOVE THAT MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS LOVE IT AND THAT I CAN DO AMAZING THINGS. THANK YOU TO ALL MY READERS. IT IS AN HONOR TO WIN THE POETRY CONTEST."

"I FEEL LIKE A WINNER KNOWING PEOPLE ARE READING MY POETRY. IT FEELS GOOD TO BE IN A BOOK. I WANT TO WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

"WRITING HELPS ME STAY PRODUCTIVE. IT IS EXCITING TO BE IN A BOOK. IT MAKES SENSE AND IT MAKES ME HAPPY."

“I ALWAYS TRY TO WRITE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD. GOD AND HUMANS BOTH USE HUMOR AND I LIKE TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH THROUGH MY WRITING. I FEEL PRIVILEGED TO WRITE AND BE RECOGNIZED FOR MY WRITING. THANK YOU."

“THIS ISN'T THE FIRST BOOK I'VE BEEN IN. BETTER POEMS ARE ON THE WAY IN 2026.”

“WRITING LYRICS IS WRITING POETRY FOR ME. IT HELPS ME STAY CREATIVE AND I FLOW WITH MY THOUGHTS. I COPE WITH WRITING, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT FEELS LIKE I AM LOSING MY VOICE. IS IT COOL TO SEE MY WORK IN A BOOK.”

“I ENJOY MAKING GIFTS AND I LIKE THAT PEOPLE READ MY STUFF. FEELS ALRIGHT AND HELPS ME GET THROUGH THE HARD TIMES, KNOWING I HAVE FANS AND PEOPLE THAT LIKE MY WRITING.”

FIFTH ANNUAL PUBLICATION
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VOLUME 5 2025

"Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world."

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY